



From the NIFA Communications Office

NIFA in the News – Week of October 31, 2011

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In the News

Scientists trying to contain stink bug havoc (Western Farm Press 10/28).

Researchers in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences are part of a new, multi-state project to study the brown marmorated stink bug. The research is funded by a recently announced \$5.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through its Specialty Crops Research Initiative. [Link](#)

Ranch Practicum team receives grant to aid beginning ranchers (High Plains Journal 10/29). Grants totaling more than \$671,000 will expand Ranch Practicum programs in Nebraska, Wyoming and Colorado and will target education of both beginning and established ranchers. UW, UNL, and Colorado State University are co-authors of the grant and are co-project directors. The \$670,890 grant is through the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Michigan State University researcher spearheads orchard system of the future (Michigan Live 10/30). It's a fruit grower's dream. An automated delivery system would squirt precisely enough fertilizer, fungicide or bug killer directly onto each tree, each delivered by the push of a button inside an office. A Michigan State University researcher has been awarded a \$2.5 million grant to work with a team of scientists from other states to make that dream a reality. The grant is one of 29 awards, totaling \$46 million, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

USDA selects five Texas Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program awardees (North Texas e-News 10/31). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced it will offer awards to five Texas veterinarians to help repay their veterinary school loans this year. The federal Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) is designed to encourage veterinarians to practice in underserved or rural areas of the

United States, with a focus on food animal medicine. [Link](#)

MSU receives almost \$743,000 for research, courses involving sheep and organic farming (Bozeman Daily Chronicle 10/31). Montana State University has received almost \$743,000 to research the use of sheep in organic farming, incorporate those findings into MSU courses and share the discoveries with Montana producers and growers. The three-year grant was announced Oct. 25 by U.S. Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan. It was one of 23 awarded in 18 states by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Udall Announces Major Grant For NMSU Las Cruces (KRWG News 10/31). U.S. Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) today announced that New Mexico State University will receive \$800,000 to enhance programs that support underserved students and develop a skilled American workforce. The funding, made possible through a competitive grant program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), is awarded to institutions based on their commitment to meeting the needs of the Hispanic community. It will be used to mentor students who want to pursue a career in natural resource management. [Link](#)

MSU Gets Grant for Sheep Research Involving Organic Farming (Ag Weekly 10/31). Montana State University (MSU) has received almost \$743,000 to research the use of sheep in organic farming, incorporate those findings into MSU courses and share the discoveries with Montana producers and growers. The three-year grant announced Tuesday by U.S. Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan was one of 23 awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture in 18 states. The grants totaling \$19 million were given through two programs - the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative and the Organic Transitions Program. Patrick Hatfield, principal investigator of MSU's project and a professor in the Department of Animal and Range Sciences, said organic farmers don't use chemicals to control weeds, so they often rely on tilling the soil. [Link](#)

Alabama grant to fund organic vegetable research (Southeast Farm Press 11/1). Auburn University Entomologist Henry Fadamiro and a multi-disciplinary team of scientists have been awarded a four-year, \$881,829 grant by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture to develop and demonstrate successful integrated pest management, or IPM, strategies for the organic production of cabbage, collard, broccoli and other high-value cruciferous vegetable crops in Alabama and surrounding states. [Link](#)

NMSU grazing research could influence wildfire management strategies (Southwest Farm Press 11/1). According to NMSU rangeland expert Derek Bailey, overgrazing and 20th century fire-suppression strategies have laid the groundwork for some of today's "catastrophic" wildfires. In some areas, the grasses that fueled normal and periodic low-intensity surface fires in the past have been replaced by densely packed trees and brush that fuel the raging prairie and forest fires seen in recent years, including record-setting 2011 fires in the Southwest. The project is funded by a

\$363,000 grant from the USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. [Link](#)

University of Minnesota Researchers to Expand Wine Studies (KSTP 11/1).

University of Minnesota researchers have already developed wine grapes hearty enough for Minnesota winters. Now they're studying how to turn those grapes into better-tasting, better-selling wines. They received a new \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crop Initiative. As part of a multistate team, they'll work to determine the best growing conditions, how to modify local grapes' acidity and showcase their aroma, as well as how to draw visitors. [Link](#)

USDA Specialty Crop Fund Awards \$353,000 to Missouri Agriculture Projects (Kansas City Infozine 11/1).

The Missouri Department of Agriculture announced that 17 agricultural projects across Missouri have been selected to receive funding provided by USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program to assist in the competitiveness of specialty crops in the state. The federal assistance totaling over \$353,000 for Missouri projects is targeted to specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture, including floriculture and turf grass sod. "The innovative specialty crop growers throughout Missouri are dedicated to education, good management practices and seeking new ways to increase market opportunities for Missouri farm families," said Director of Agriculture Dr. Jon Hagler. "As specialty crops continue to grow in popularity among both producers and consumers, we are committed to connecting Missouri farmers with value-added opportunities and the resources necessary for them to succeed in meeting their customers' needs." [Link](#)

UTPA students to undergo giant reed study with USDA scientists (McAllen Monitor 11/1).

Six University of Texas-Pan American students are beginning research on the giant reed this week, thanks to a \$245,000 grant, even as the center facilitating the program prepares for possible closure. UTPA Associate Professor of Biology Rod Summy received the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture Hispanic Serving Institutions grant, awarded to universities where more than 25 percent of students are Hispanic. The project funded is to let students conduct research and explore career opportunities as they help develop ways to combat the giant reed. [Link](#)

U of M researchers join effort to help cold-climate wine industry thrive (Hutchison Leader 11/2).

Wine grapes can be grown in cold climates; that's been established since the University of Minnesota began releasing cold-hardy varieties in the 1970s. But how can the wine industry in the Upper Midwest and Northeast take the next steps toward economic viability? That's the focus of a new \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crop Research Initiative. Researchers from the University of Minnesota are part of a multi-state team tackling obstacles in vineyards, wineries, tasting rooms and tourism to bring cold-hardy grapes to a wider market. [Link](#)

Grant to UNH brings military teens for winter sports camps (Fosters Daily Democrat 11/2). The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program, in partnership with Northeast Passage at UNH, has received a grant from the U.S. Department of Defense and other partners to share New Hampshire's winter sports experiences with teens from military families around the country during four camps in January and February, 2012. Funding for the camps comes from a partnership between the Department of Defense, Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the U.S. Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Grant Money to Help Iowa and Nebraska Wine Growers (WOWT 11/2). A recently awarded \$2.5 million grant will help colder-weather states from Nebraska to Iowa to New York overcome obstacles in the vineyard, winery and tasting room and also improve tourism. The grant's focus is a group of extremely cold-hardy wine grape varieties, new to both growers and consumers. These grapes have spawned new small winery industries in the upper Midwest and Northeast over the past decade. [Link](#)

Invasive ants march on Hawaii (Western Farm Press 11/3). Odorous house ants — so called because they tend to invade houses and smell like coconut when smashed — have found their way to Hawaii. And, according to Purdue University entomologist Grzegorz Buczkowski, it doesn't seem as though they have plans to end their vacations. "Odorous house ants in Hawaii are not like they are here in natural areas where they live in small colonies. They are creating megacolonyes like they do in urban areas," said Buczkowski, whose findings were published in the journal Myrmecological News. "We went there to eliminate the ants, but we found it's too late to treat for them." The U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture and DuPont funded Buczkowski's research. [Link](#)

Growing organic market prompts new USDA research grants (Food Navigator USA 11/3). The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has awarded 23 new grants to organic agriculture research projects as part of its National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), in response to increased adoption of organic practices. [Link](#)

Sunshine and grain (The Argonaut 11/4). The Palouse's largely agrarian economy is heavily dependent on weather that affects the growing season, and in light of projections for Northwest climate change the University of Idaho and other regional institutions are taking advantage of a five-year, \$20 million grant. The program, Regional Approaches to Climate Change in Pacific Northwest Agriculture (REACCH PNA), looks at aspects of grain production and climate change. Project director and UI professor of chemical ecology in the department of Plant, Soil, and Entomological sciences Sanford Eigenbrode said the grant, awarded by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, encompasses four institutions: UI, Washington State University, Oregon State University and the USDA's Agricultural Research Service. [Link](#)

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